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GRANTS TO BENEFIT ENDANGERED SPECIES NOW AVAILABLE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN HAWAI'I

HONOLULU — Grants to benefit endangered plant and wildlife species are now available to private landowners in Hawai'i

The Department of Land and Natural Resource (DLNR) is seeking landowner partners to help protect threatened plants and wildlife on private land.

“We recognize the need to engage private landowners in the conservation of rare and endangered species and apply with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to implement the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). It provides funding and technical assistance to enhance, protect, or restore habitats that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands,” says DLNR Chairperson Peter Young.

In Hawai'i, the program is administered by DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW).

There are currently 378 listed threatened and endangered species, 127 proposed and candidate species in Hawai'i,” Young added.

Many of these species are found on private lands in the state. Over 60% of the total land area in Hawai'i and 50% of conservation district lands are under private ownership.

“The cooperation and assistance of private landowners is essential to be able to conserve and restore native flora and fauna,” said Young.

Applications for Landowner Incentive Program grants are being accepted **through October 31, 2004**, but it is advised that applicants submit proposals early so that staff can help refine proposals to improve the likelihood for receiving funding.

“The Landowner Incentive Program supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to planning or research activities. Examples of the types of projects that may be funded include removal of alien species that threaten the recovery of native species, reintroducing rare species, constructing fencing to exclude animals from sensitive habitats, or planting native vegetation to restore a rare plant community,” Young said.

The results of the actions must be measurable and the landowner must agree to allow biologists access to the property to assess the success of the project objectives.

The FWS requires that landowners contribute a minimum of 25% of the total project cost and it must come from a non-federal source. This match can either be a direct cash contribution to the project or in-kind contribution of labor, materials, or equipment use.

Funding for 2005 has not been appropriated, but DLNR is now accepting proposals in anticipation of that funding being available.

DLNR also recommends that applicants refer to regional plans and conservation efforts since projects that build partnerships with other landowners and organizations are encouraged.

The Landowner Incentive Program is a nationally-competitive program and projects will be selected based on the extent to which proposed actions will help species recovery or will reduce threats to the species

Additional information, guidelines, and an application form are available on the DOFAW web site at <http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw/LIP/> or from the Conservation Initiatives Coordinator, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, 1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325, Honolulu, HI 96813; phone (808) 587-4171.

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